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ABSTRACT

Some higher education observers suggest that the increasing complexity of academic governance is a way of characterizing the evolution of social expectations. Others say it underscores the adaptability of higher education's organizational structures and practices. As a general account, increasing complexity fits better during times of growth than during times of consolidation or selective reinvestment. Alternative accounts are needed to analyze the dynamics of change during restructuring. Such conceptual advancements could add analytical sharpness to public academic governance rather than merely tracking changes in premises and norms in the division of academic labor. A chasm exists between management and governance. Faculty members are often characterized as unwilling to learn the principles of quality and efficiency espoused by trustees, presidents, and deans. They are commonly cast as scapegoats, protecting their turf from downsizing and restructuring even when the good of the whole depends on such changes. Trustees, presidents, and deans are often accused of bypassing faculty consultation and acting to further their own partisan interests. This chasm is seen as a gap between the common good and self-interest. The paper calls for deliberative efforts to bridge these chasms, noting research that may shed light on effective ways to foster collaboration. (Contains 37 bibliographic references.) (SM)

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OCCASIONAL PAPER No. 42

Academic Governance: New Light on Old Issues

By Patricia J. Gumport

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Some higher education obersvers have suggested that the increasing complexity of academic governance has become a shorthand way of characterizing the evolution of societal expectations. Others have said this complexity underscores the adaptability of higher education's organizational structures and practices. As a general account, increasing complexity fits better during times of growth than it does during times of consolidation or selective reinvestment. Alternative accounts are needed to analyze the dynamics of change during restructuring. Such conceptual advancements could add analytical sharpness to the domain of public academic governance rather than merely tracking changes in the premises and norms in the division of academic labor.

A chasm exists in contemporary public higher education between management and governance. Faculty members often are characterized as unwilling to learn the principles of quality and efficiency espoused by trustees, presidents, and deans. They commonly are cast as scapegoats, hunkering down to protect their turf from downsizing and restructuring, even when the good of the whole is said to depend on such changes. On the other side, trustees, presidents, and deans often are accused of bypassing norms of faculty consultation and acting to further their own partisan interests or agendas. This chasm can also be viewed as a gap between the common good and self-interest.

In surveying the literature on organizational change in higher education governance, the author calls for deliberative efforts to bridge these chasms and points to research that may shed light on effective ways to foster collaboration.

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Discussions of governance and the challenges it faces in higher education often begin with an acknowledgement of *increasing complexity*. Indeed, over the past four decades, the theme of complexity in academic governance has served as a touchstone for many of higher education's notable observers—from Glenny (1959), Corson (1960), Kerr (1963), and Berdahl (1971) to Birnbaum (1992), Clark (1993), Leslie and Fretwell (1996) to organizational theorists such as Etzioni (1964), Cohen and March (1974), and Cameron (1984).

In the past decade, complexity has become a shorthand to characterize the evolution of societal expectations as well as to underscore the adaptive capacity of higher education's organizational structures and practices. This characterization has gained currency, particularly as a defense of contemporary American universities. As expressed by Burton Clark (1993), a leading proponent of this line of historical explanation, universities adapt to "a steady accretion of realistic expectations [that] cannot be stopped, let alone reversed." The trend is cast as one of growth and increased momentum, wherein universities have responded to expanded societal expectations by taking on additional functions: producing knowledge, training the country's scientific and engineering personnel, providing health care, and contributing more prominently to economic development, for example.

Rooted in Durkheimian premises of differentiation, this analytical perspective suggests that the key feature of higher education's responsiveness has been

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increased structural complexity. Fueled by expansion and by attempts to accommodate multiple and, at times, contradictory expectations, the formal organizational structure is expanded and subdivided into differentiated units. While this pattern of adaptation can cause fragmentation, the organization can remain integrated by establishing some mechanisms for coordinating academic work and for promulgating shared beliefs about institutional purposes. What is essential for keeping organizational participants and their sub-units anchored is recognizing their ontological interdependence.

While this broad evolutionary pattern of change in academic organizations is accepted by many in the U.S. system, it has not been empirically tested across historical eras and institutional types. As a general analytical account or narrative, however, it shows itself in a number of popular book-length essays grounded in the experience and reflections of prominent leaders. Among these essays are Rosovsky's *The University,* Bok's *Higher Learning,* and Kennedy's *Academic Duty.* Even so, surprisingly few empirical studies have been undertaken to test and advance this understanding of organizational adaptation in higher education settings; nor has empirical research explored the question of which conditions best enable campus leaders to achieve Durkheimian integration through such means as managing contradictory external demands or reconciling competing entitlement claims on internal resources.

As a commonly held perspective on academic change, increasing complexity offers a functionalist account of inevitably more complex structural forms that correspond with the proliferation of tasks taken on by differentiated subunits in the organization. As such, it fits better as an explanation for organizational adaptation in times of growth than it does during conditions of consolidation or selective reinvestment. In the latter circumstances, restructuring occurs, and conflict and competition, which may have been endemic all along, are no longer easily ameliorated in an agreed-upon trajectory with a Durkheimian narrative of progress.

Thus, alternative frameworks are needed to depict the sort of dynamics of academic change that entail a struggle for survival. These new accounts also must provide insights that

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can help academic leaders anticipate and address systemic vulnerabilities that may arise (Gumport 1993).

As one alternative, a Darwinian approach to evolution may offer a more apt account of dynamics in times of restructuring. Indeed, contemporary evidence may suggest a survival-of-the-fittest dynamic in which academic knowledge areas/departments/instructors may each be seen as a species struggling to survive. Given limited resources, there is heightened competition both among species and within them. The premise of natural selection is that the strongest will adapt, thrive, and reproduce in a competitive context, while the weakest will wither away. Those achieving longevity will have adapted to the many ways of gaining advantage. Within this account, this struggle for survival is presumed to serve the good of the whole. This premise usually finds support only among those who believe that higher education functions as a meritocracy.

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Clearly, those of us who study change in academic organizations lack a robust array of theoretical alternatives with which to shed light on the contemporary patterns of evolution in the academy, specifically in this era of restructuring and selective reinvestment. In the study of higher education organizations, and especially in the study of governance challenges, there are perennial questions: For example, to what extent should academic organizations adapt to change, and what academic units warrant investment or elimination? To what extent and in what ways can higher education leaders enhance their organization's ability to respond in a way that is consistent with its legacies as an institution? Under what conditions do campus leaders have the potential to reshape environmental pressures as well as to realign internal campus coalitions?

These questions sound fundamental, old, and familiar to governing boards, presidents and faculty, even though the perspectives of each these players on any given issue are likely to array themselves along different fault lines. And yet, it is these old issues, I propose, that make up fertile ground—and suitable priorities—for advancing the research agenda. In this essay, I will suggest that these issues can be fruitfully addressed by broadening the methodological approach beyond common survey methods to include in-depth case studies that can make explicit the dynamics of conflict that play out in campus settings.

Contemporary Public Universities. In scanning the impressive diversity of academic landscapes in U.S. universities and colleges, one sees that the challenges of academic governance in public universities require further analysis. Campuses constitute a setting in which the accretion of societal expectations often is experienced in the form of competing and contradictory demands. This is not to suggest that other sectors are spared these challenges. Rather, in this age of heightened accountability demands and public scrutiny, public universities can be instructive cases for how to wrestle with poignant conflicts over

Symposium Papers

This Occasional Paper is the second in a series of four commissioned by AGB to help the association determine its research agenda. The papers and their authors are listed below. For additional information on the Charlottesville Symposium, see pages 4-5.

No. 41 **"AGB-UVA Symposium on Research and Scholarship on Higher Education," by Brian Pusser**

No. 42 **"Academic Governance: New Light on Old Issues," by Patricia J. Gumport**

No. 43 **"New Approaches to Research on Leadership and Governance," by Annette Kolodny**

No. 44 **"Higher Education's Future in the 'Corporatized' Economy," by James R. Mingle**

CHARLOTTESVILLE SYMPOSIUM

This paper was one of four prepared for the Symposium on Research and Scholarship on Higher Education Governance, Trusteeship, and the Academic Presidency sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges and the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. The Symposium was made possible through a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It was held on December 5-6, 1999, in Charlottesville and included the participants listed here.

Bennett G. Boggs	**Special Assistant to the Dean Curry School of Education University of Virginia**
David W. Breneman	**University Professor and Dean of the Curry School of Education University of Virginia**
Joseph C. Burke	**Director, Higher Education Program Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government**
Harvey Goldstein	**Professor University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill**
Patricia J. Gumport	**Executive Director National Center for Postsecondary Improvement School of Education, Stanford University**
James Hearn	**Professor of Educational Policy and Administration University of Minnesota at Twin Cities**
Donald Heller	**Assistant Professor of Education Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education University of Michigan**
Richard T. Ingram	**President Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
D. Bruce Johnstone	**Assistant Professor of Education Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education University of Michigan**

which adaptations best serve a myriad of interests (for example, public interests, institutional interests, student interests).

As academic, fiscal, and political matters have become inescapably confounded, leaders of public universities—be they presidents or trustees—are expected to manage for external and internal legitimacy, yet they are given few guidelines for doing so. While there are some guidelines for what constitutes effectiveness (Chait, Holland, and Taylor 1991; Chait, Taylor, and Holland 1996), contextual and political dimensions of academic governance merit further study. Particularly within public universities, we see competing interpretations of institutional purposes as well as wider political agendas being played out in policy making, prompting questions about the appropriateness of specific adaptive responses to new demands as well as the effectiveness of university leaders' strategies. For instance, note the two cases of struggle surrounding policy changes that were well-publicized in the late 1990s: the University of California altered its

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David W. Leslie	**Professor of Education** **College of William and Mary**
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Judith Block McLaughlin	**Chair, Harvard Seminar for New Presidents** **Director, Higher Education Program** **Harvard University**
Margaret A. Miller	**President** **American Association for Higher Education**
James R. Mingle	**Executive Director** **State Higher Education Executive Officers**
Richard Novak	**Director of Public Sector Programs** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Barbara L. Perkins	**Director, Zwingle Resource Center** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Brian Pusser	**Assistant Professor** **Curry School of Education** **University of Virginia**
Merrill P. Schwartz	**Director of Special Projects** **Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges**
Myra H. Strober	**Programs Officer in Higher Education** **Atlantic Philanthropic Services**
Alton Taylor	**Professor** **Curry School of Education** **University of Virginia**
Michael S. Teitelbaum	**Demographer** **Alfred P. Sloan Foundation**

affirmative action policy; and the City University of New York altered its policy on remedial education. In each case, there was such a display of competing interpretations and agendas that a general account of increasing complexity cannot begin to capture what transpired; a Darwinian account of the change process seems more appropriate.

Stepping back, we can see that fundamental descriptive questions about the direction and management of academic change are entangled in prescriptive presumptions about institutional purposes and appropriate governance processes. Consider such key questions as: how do universities prioritize among competing environmental demands (for example, to cut costs, adapt to technology and improve quality)? How do presidents and boards obtain faculty buy-in when decisions must be made swiftly and centrally? How do campus leaders take into account the legacies, values, and norms of the organization? For each question there is an implicit How should?— especially in the current climate in

which organizational change is cast as a requirement for improvement, and rewards are given for demonstrable improvement. Often prescriptions run ahead of a research-based understanding of effectiveness, as those people on the front lines must solve immediate problems. Consequently, most higher education research tends to analyze what happened rather than inform processes in advance of decision making.

To date, studies of organizational behavior have provided valuable conceptual insights for examining some basic parameters of academic settings. Illuminating the contours of academic organizations, organizational studies have identified, for example, the peculiar nature of authority in academic organizations (bureaucratic and professional), the enormous versatility of loose coupling as a mechanism in organizational change (enabling the appearance of responsiveness), and the vital role of managing both information and symbolism in strategic change.

In spite of these advances, organizational applications to the study of higher education often have focused more on changes in the formal structure than on the evolving normative structures. Normative foundations tend to be dynamic, contested, and played out on multiple levels; thus they are slippery to study. Moreover, approaches by researchers within the study of higher education unfortunately have tended to be topic-oriented (e.g., they are studies of faculty productivity, pressures on the presidency, or changing demographics of students). Each such topical study sheds light only on a selected part, rather than on the health of the whole institution. And it is the rare study that addresses the interplay between changes that are both structural and normative, such as changes in the division of academic labor. In this way, the goal of fostering a vital interdependence among the parts is neglected.

Familiar Terrain, Renewed Urgency. Before turning to examples of promising research priorities, I want to identify what I believe to be two enduring tensions—old issues that could be studied in a new light. I offer these two tensions as among the most significant issues to have resurfaced in the contemporary era. I cast them both as chasms, and I assert that it is incumbent upon higher education researchers to help campus leaders build the bridge (or multiple bridges) that may be needed to secure a stronger institution.

First, I want to clarify the spirit of my remarks and emphasize their urgency. In what I see as an unfortunate drift in attention over the past decade, campus leaders dealing with heightened demands for accountability have focused on scanning and managing the environment and responding to external mandates. In this context, they have focused only secondarily on the internal dynamics of the academic institution. When internal dynamics have been in the spotlight, the tendency by campus leaders and external critics alike has been to criticize academic organizations for their inherent inefficiency or inertia, to cast faculty as unproductive or self-interested, or to presume that academic governance practices are ineffective or even obstructionist. In any case, strategic management advice often recommends that campus leaders bypass traditional governance structures and consultation processes to make much-needed changes. While such approaches may be necessary in a genuine crisis, their use in common practice has adverse cumulative consequences.

It is striking that as trust in faculty members as professionals has declined, there has been a corresponding rise in enthusiasm for managerial initiatives. These two ideas appear to be mutually reinforcing, especially when the locus of control for academic decision making moves out of academic departments and when imperatives from the corporate world are championed as models for adaptation. In fact, as many of the past decade's observers have noted, there are powerful external trends that are changing in higher education, as outlined by Mingle. The locus of control on some issues has even shifted outside of the university, with state-level actors in some settings mandating programmatic restructuring in public higher education, as Gumport and Pusser (1999) have discussed.

Widespread academic changes also extend to establishing year-round calendar operation, distance-learning initiatives, and assessment of desirable student outcomes—all of which involve decisions with educational implications for which faculty, no doubt, could lend some expertise. If faculty members are not

incorporated into the planning and implementation of these academic changes, this is significant. Among the many reasons for consulting faculty is that a failure to do so runs counter to expectations that many faculty bring to their workplaces. Across fields of study, generations of the academic profession have been socialized in ideals of shared governance, and, stated more pragmatically, prerogatives such as the right to active participation, or at least consultation, in academic decisions. In this respect, when I couple this with the movement by academic quality proponents to establish performance measures for faculty work, I am concerned that today's universities will disappoint, and that tomorrow's ultimately may disillusion, the talented faculty we seek to recruit and retain. My remarks are made in the spirit of considering how public universities may be sustained, not only as economic and organizational entities, but also as intellectually viable and attractive places for academic work.

I am concerned that today's universities will disappoint, and that tomorrow's ultimately may disillusion, the talented faculty we seek to recruit and retain.

Chasm Between Management and Governance. The first of the two tensions is the widening chasm between management and governance in universities. In the current era, management and governance have not been functioning well, whether viewed separately or together. The chasm is evident in the academic quality movement, in which proponents such as Massy and Wilger (1999) have suggested that faculty members are "close-minded" and "unwilling to take the time" to learn quality principles and processes; and that efforts to assess faculty work often stop at the doorstep of the academic department or the department chair, hampered by faculty distrust and resistance.

How could such good intentions of improving academic quality be perceived so negatively by faculty? When seen in historical perspective, faculty resistance is entirely predictable, and there is some foundation for faculty suspicions that new mechanisms may be used for surveillance and eventually to redefine the terms of their work.

Let's consider in a few broad-brush strokes the evolution of shared governance and the rise of academic management. According to George Keller (citing the historian Walter Metzger), it was not until the early decades of the 20th century that American professors moved beyond their independent pursuits and "began to assert themselves as partners with trustees, presidents, and deans in governing, pressing hard for shared governance to co-direct their institutions.... Reaching its zenith in the late 1960s and into the 1970s, shared governance became less attractive to faculty, who grew disaffected with it once they realized how time consuming and contentious (even politically nasty) administration could be."

Keller notes the radical students and financial challenges of that era. At that time, there was a widespread recognition among the growing numbers of full-time, non-faculty personnel in universities as well as among full-time academic managers that academic processes were unduly slow and could frustrate their efforts to move forward with campus initiatives, including those aimed at financial management. Keep in mind that the centralized tracking of departmental activities in those days was limited: information, if available at the central level at all, was about inputs (expenditures, class sizes, workloads, student characteristics) and not about student learning outcomes. Often, that information was collected in the name of campuswide or systemwide coordination: The university became so large and the division of labor so specialized that centralized administrative units were rationalized as a functional necessity for achieving Durkheimian coordination.

By the 1980s, as Keller continues, faculty retreated even further from a commitment to governance and expressed frustration over the bureaucratic practices of their institutions. As new forms of academic management gained momentum, the common approach

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was to become more and more hierarchical and cost-conscious. Moreover, technological advancements enabled the creation of management information systems that kept institutional researchers busy with data collection and an expanded capacity to monitor the detailed workings of the large and decentralized university. By the late 1990s, Keller concludes, most American professors at elite universities fully embraced the independence that was common a century ago, "seeing themselves as independent semi-professionals, free to lecture or consult off campus, conduct research instead of teach, and own a business on the side; they see their time as their own, not belonging to their university; they do not regard themselves as employees, although everyone else in the institution is regarded as such."

Based upon Keller's account, it seems entirely predictable that faculty would resist administrative controls that treat them as skilled workers in complex organizations. The heart of the matter is that many faculty embrace autonomy as a professional value. While many faculty would advocate such autonomy as a necessary condition for carrying out their many academic responsibilities, others would see it as a retreat from institutional responsibility, leaving a vacuum for the administration and upper-level academic managers to fill.

In either case, faculty members *expect* jurisdiction over the academic domain, particularly with regard to the appointment and promotion of academic personnel, the restructuring of academic programs, and the decisions as to what and how students need to learn, even as faculty complain about the time involved. We are left with the question as to whether such a coupling of autonomy and responsibility is feasible in the present era. And even as we ponder it, bridging the gap between managerial initiatives and faculty buy-in has become a significant challenge for today's university leaders, even on campuses where faculty senates are fully functioning.

As a case in point, consider two controversial examples of managerial initiatives from the University of California at Berkeley, which is often regarded as the apex of faculty power and participation in governance. Two recent episodes there were described by some faculty members as alleged violations of academic governance. One was the five-year $25 million contract established in 1998 between the Novartis Corporation and Berkeley's Department of Plant and Microbial Biology in the College of Natural Resources. The second was the Chancellor's agreement (in an effort to settle a student strike in April of 1999) to add eight new academic positions in ethnic studies over the next five years.

The chasm between management and governance thus needs attention, and one would hope that trustees can help focus it. As we consider the many challenges, we need to think more creatively about how to obtain faculty members' cooperation in assessing the quality of their work. What are the options for accomplishing this? One possibility is to impose more-elaborate assessment mechanisms. In my opinion, a heavier hammer is unlikely to cultivate faculty buy-in. A second option is to get an external body to mandate assessment of faculty work in a way that would require faculty and university managers to work together for their institution's survival in the face of a common threat. But few institutional leaders, in my view, would welcome yet another hammer from outside the institution. Third, what if we could change the internalized expectations for faculty work? This is possible, though the process is likely to be slow as generations of graduate students become socialized toward a new set of cultural norms.

A fourth option is to consider reframing the discourse of institutional and individual performance assessment and the conversation about academic quality. Campus leaders need to declare at the outset whether they intend to use assessments that resemble a Darwinian natural selection mechanism. (Blanket claims that this assessment will elevate the whole enterprise will not suffice, as faculty will still be concerned about the weeding-out process.) In addition, I think the way to draw in university faculty is to devise a discourse where knowledge is central and where improving knowledge transmission and knowledge production are paramount considerations compatible with the pursuit of their scholarly agendas. At the same time, we need to create structures that presume and reward faculty involvement in institutional/academic planning, rather than move planning and administrative responsibilities farther from the faculty. From this

perspective, it is possible that research could illuminate ways to forge a stronger tie with the knowledge work that inspires so many faculty members while strengthening a collective interest in their academic home.

Collective vs. Individual Interests. Turning to the second (interrelated) tension, I move from a discussion of the internal dynamics of the institution to what I see as symptoms of the changing stature of the university in society at large. As Clark Kerr (1987) has thoughtfully argued, universities around the world over the past four decades have become increasingly central to modern life, abandoning their traditional guild-like status on the periphery of society. Accordingly, he asserts that the "wealth of nations now depends on higher education as never before" for such critical functions as economic opportunity, human capital development, and military competitiveness. I agree. And I think we also can benefit from viewing the campus as a local arena—or a microcosm—in which fundamental societal tensions are played out, specifically the tensions between collective and individual interests.

The tensions are manifest at several levels, as I have seen in my research on academic restructuring in public higher education. At the most basic operating level, the tension appears when faculty members try to get what they can from their institutions rather than puzzling over how best to serve them. It also may be seen in the cosmopolitan faculty members who prefer to tend to their scholarship, neglecting curriculum planning. It also is evident in the arm twisting required for recruiting new department chairs or committee leaders. At the campus level, it may be seen in the academic units that hunker down to protect their turf from downsizing and restructuring, even though the good of the whole is said to depend on such changes. At the system level, it may be seen when a campus asserts the need for particular faculty billets or new academic programs within a context of heightened budgetary or political constraints at the system level. Finally, it may be seen at the level of governing boards when special interests are in evidence, despite AGB's mandate for trustees to "serve the institution or the system as a whole and not any particular constituency or segment of the organization."

In general, I want to characterize this tension as a chasm between the common good and individual self-interest, and thereby call attention to terrain explored by economists, political scientists, philosophers, and sociologists. The basic challenge I see is getting from *yours and mine* to *ours*. Pursuing this as a researchable issue, scholars across the disciplines have studied the nature of incentives, coalitions, choice, and commitment under varying conditions. Yet, when viewed in the context of academic governance, the analytical sharpness routinely used to examine changes in the division of academic labor tends to be set aside. Herein lies some potential.

When considering internal campus dynamics, for example, instead of fostering genuine communication and collaboration, we often hear platitudes and pleas for balance such as, "we are all in this together"; "we all need to pay more attention to local matters"; and "on the scale balancing faculty rights and responsibilities, it's time for the faculty to give back." The problem with this is that the plea by those who occupy campus leadership positions is inherently ineffective. Others in the organization are not drawn into the campus as a collective enterprise; instead, they remain motivated to maximize their individual interests or to stick with primary allegiances to their discipline or to appeal to a more abstract notion of the academic enterprise more broadly construed.

Another way the collective interest fails to take hold is manifest in academic cultures that support and reward competition rather than collaboration.

Another way the collective interest fails to take hold is manifest in academic cultures that support and reward competition rather than collaboration. Because ideals of academic governance are fundamentally grounded in collaborative processes, the future of the university is bound to falter without trust, a

shared sense of purpose, or at the very least a perception of a shared stake in consequences.

Without mechanisms for integrating the fragmented parts, critical questions remain open-ended, and campus leaders face a mix of possibilities: Can campus leaders predict whether a particular issue will spur apathy or a protracted battle? Should they strive to preserve ambiguity as the closest they can get to organizational consensus? How should they respond to those who claim to speak for the whole but in fact retain the hope that their particular interests will be taken care of through appeals to the mythical academic community ("as members of the community, our voices must be heard") or who invoke obligation due to ownership ("after all, whose university is it?")? Given this mix, no wonder campus leaders have failed to build a bridge from *yours and mine* to *ours*.

In this sense, research potentially could assist campus leaders engaged in academic reform in better understanding the murky normative foundations of their organizations. In practical terms, this part of the organizational domain most often is formally relegated to human resource managers. But I think there is an opportunity for those who govern academic institutions to lead the way in resolving this societal tension—to find effective ways to cultivate a shared sense of ownership that goes beyond individual self-interest. And in so doing, they just may generate increased support of higher education from the wider society.

I find evidence of this potential among college and university presidents whom I interviewed during daylong focus groups in summer 1998. As one may expect, these discussions included comments about the frustrations of managing in today's climate of public scrutiny and accountability demands, and they affirmed prior research findings that presidents were tackling "impossible jobs" that held the presidents responsible without giving them authority (Birnbaum 1989, Yoshino 1999). The presidents perceived that they played a critical managerial role between trustees and faculty and that they were expected to *interpret* campus community demands, *select* which of those pressures were priorities, and *signal* the urgency of those realities to their constituencies (including internal ones, e.g., the faculty).

Research potentially could assist campus leaders engaged in academic reform in better understanding the murky normative foundations of their organizations.

However, there also was much discussion of a president's own agency, specifically the potential to reshape societal expectations for their institutions. Along these lines, presidents were optimistic that they could be more proactive: they could cultivate a demand for the enduring academic strengths of the campus; they could speak for the long-term public interest and provide a moral compass (particularly in urban settings); and they could convey confidence to external stakeholders that it is possible to move internal campus norms away from competition and toward resource sharing.

I think it is noteworthy that public university and college presidents expressed the willingness—even a sense of obligation—to speak out as advocates for public higher education, though they were concerned that such positioning would be viewed by critics as self-serving. How powerful is the individualism in the contemporary climate, where the presumption of self-interest is asserted and used to dismiss leaders even if they intend to speak for the collective interest!

This raises obvious questions as to the role of trustees as well, whether they act independently or in concert with campus presidents. For example: In what ways can or should trustees attempt to reshape environmental pressures or cultivate constituencies? To what extent can trustees legitimately and effectively speak for the whole, without being dismissed by stakeholders of opposing viewpoints?

Complexity Revisited. Among the many promising research priorities in the arena of governance, perspectives from organizational literature have much to offer about adaptation

to changing environments. They can help us reexamine the complexity proposition (accretion of demands, adaptation via structural differentiation) as well as the Darwinian account (a competitive struggle for survival such that the strongest achieve longevity). They also can help us frame issues that are simultaneously normative and structural. As was evident in the two tensions I characterized above—the chasm between management and governance, and the chasm between collective and individual interest—organizational research, I think, can more directly help campus leaders build more effective bridges.

In fact, we would do well to consider how to build bridges across both chasms simultaneously. In this light, one key question becomes, What is the basis for collaboration? This issue is central for achieving Durkheimian integration as well as for ensuring Darwinian survival. In either case, each trajectory promises progress. Yet, when we attempt collaboration in higher education settings, it becomes critical that we determine how to foster the recognition that we all have a shared stake in the outcome.

A related issue is how to manage for legitimacy. Clearly, it is not sufficient to simply comply with the steady accretion of demands from the campus community; campuses must do so while appropriately taking into account their institutional legacies, as I have argued elsewhere (Gumport 2000).

Thus, there is a critical nexus in need of further research to illuminate ways to more effectively manage organizational change while simultaneously managing these demands. In addition to Leslie and Fretwell's *Wise Moves in Hard Times* (1996) and Clark's *Creating Entrepreneurial Universities* (1998), there are other works from the past decade that bring to light the complexity of academic governance in contemporary contexts. There is the work of Schuster, Smith, Corak and Yamada (1994), Chait, Holland, and Taylor (1991) and Chait, Taylor and Holland (1996). Those works that contextualize decisions and board actions with interview data and campus archives provide a vivid portrait of decision-making processes, the alternatives perceived to be available at the time, as well as the consequences and implications for action under similar conditions. As Hardy (1990) has suggested, we also would benefit from research that moves "from the design of collegial organizations to the collegial management of decisions."

Furthermore, we need studies that analyze academic changes within an era of selective consolidation and reinvestment, as these conditions tend to call upon those responsible for campus governance to work within organizational dynamics where value conflicts and contention are explicit and not easily reconcilable. In this context, two recently completed in-depth case studies are especially insightful: Pusser's (1999) study of the University of California Regents' policy change regarding affirmative action; and Waters's (1998) study of trustee decision making and information flows in a small, private institution. In each study, the strategic research site was characterized by marked fragmentation, an absence of a working consensus, and ambiguity over jurisdictions of authority. Each researcher drew upon concepts from political theory and organizational theory, used a mix of archival and interview data, and contributed an enriched understanding of the parameters for effective governance under such conditions.

Yet another potentially valuable line of inquiry might be found in research on networks, such as a study underway that examines connections between governing boards and corporate networks (Gridiron 1998) and a recent study on the role of inter-organizational networks in adapting to environmental change (Kraatz 1998).

Given that this is an era in which critics assume that higher education is "self-indulgent, arrogant, and resistant to change" (Rhodes 1998), such case studies also may be valuable for providing evidence to the contrary. As is apparent in some of the studies mentioned above, there is much thoughtful reflection among campus leaders regarding 1) how to reconcile multiple and, at times, conflicting environmental pressures; 2) the merits and liabilities of alternative responses; and 3) questions of how institutional leaders can improve their stock of legitimacy with various stakeholders. Thus, such studies may offer an empirical counterpoint to widespread criticism of higher education, while simultaneously offering insights into how to effectively bridge the persistent chasms that characterize academic landscapes. ◆

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